

Remarks

Summary

Independent Claims 1, 5, 14, and 18 recite at least one feature not understood to be disclosed in the patents to Uehara, et al. and Nagashima. Therefore, the application is now in allowable form.

Status of the claims

Claims 1-27 are pending. Claims 1, 5, 14, and 18 are independent.

Requested action

Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejection in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Rejection

Claims 1-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over the patent to Uehara, et al. in view of the patent to Nagashima.

Response to rejection

This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Independent Claim 1 relates to a remanufacturing method of remanufacturing a process cartridge comprising (a) a step of preparing a used process cartridge which comprises a toner developing container, a cleaning container and pins for coupling the toner developing container

and the cleaning container at opposite longitudinal ends of the process cartridge. The toner developing container includes a toner accommodating portion, a toner supply opening, a developing roller and a developing blade, and the cleaning container includes an electrophotographic photosensitive drum. The process also comprises (b) a container separating step of separating the process cartridge into the toner developing container and the cleaning container by disengaging the pins from the process cartridge, (c) a developing roller dismounting step of dismounting the developing roller from the toner developing container separated by the container separating step, (d) a developing blade dismounting step of dismounting the developing blade from the toner developing container separated by the container separating step, (e) an elastic member mounting step of mounting an elastic member at a position spaced from the toner accommodating portion to a longitudinally inside portion of an end seal provided adjacent each of opposite longitudinal ends of the developing roller dismounted in the developing roller dismounting step or another developing roller, (f) a developing blade mounting step of mounting the developing blade dismounted in the developing blade dismounting step or another developing blade on the toner developing container separated in the container separating step or another toner developing container, (g) a developing roller mounting step of mounting the developing roller dismounted in developing roller dismounting step or another developing roller on the toner developing container having the developing blade mounted in the developing blade mounting step and separated in the container separating step or the another toner developing container having the developing blade mounted in the developing blade mounting step, (h) a toner refilling step of refilling the toner into the toner accommodating portion of the toner developing container having the developing blade mounted in the developing blade mounting

step and the developing roller mounted in the developing roller mounting step and being separated in the container separating step or a toner accommodating portion of the another toner developing container having the developing blade mounted in the developing blade mounting step and the developing roller mounted in the developing roller mounting step, and (i) a container coupling step of coupling the toner developing container having the developing blade mounted in the developing blade mounting step and the developing roller mounted in the developing roller mounting step and being separated in the container separating step or the another toner developing container having the developing blade mounted in the developing blade mounting step and the developing roller mounted in the developing roller mounting step with the cleaning container separated in the container separating step or another cleaning container by engaging the pins disengaged in the container separating step or other pins into them.

By this arrangement, and particularly by using step (e), a process cartridge can be remanufactured without mounting a sealing member to reseal a toner supply opening, thereby effectively preventing toner leakage without remounting the sealing member. This feature is discussed at page 38, line 13 through page 43, line 17 of the specification.

Page 12 of the Office Action admits that the toner seals in the Nagashima patent are different from those of the claimed invention. For that reason, the Office Action cites the Uehara, et al. patent. But the Uehara, et al. patent states at column 9, lines 10-14:

The auxiliary sealing members 62, 62 are disposed at positions corresponding to the recesses 54 limiting the opposite ends of the open chamber 53 so as to overlap the corresponding side sealing members 55 by a width H5, respectively, as shown in FIG. 6.

Thus, the Uehara, et al. patent is not understood to disclose or suggest an elastic member mounting step of mounting an elastic member at a position spaced from the toner accommodating portion to a longitudinally inside portion of an end seal, as recited by step (e) of independent Claim 1.

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness against Claim 1, MPEP 2142 requires that the cited art disclose or suggest *all* the claimed features. But here, as noted above, the patent cited to show step (e) in Claim 1, is not understood to do so. Therefore, Applicants do not understand the Patent Office to have yet established a *prima facie* case of obviousness against Claim 1. And since independent Claims 5, 14, and 18 recite similar language, they are allowable for similar reasons.

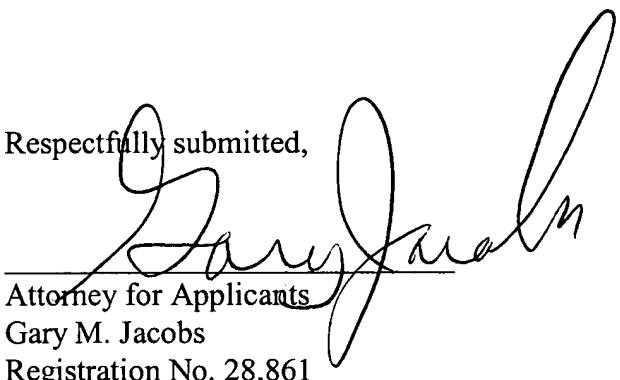
The dependent claims are allowable for the reasons given for the independent claims and because they recite features that are patentable in their own right. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully solicited.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the claims are now in allowable form. Therefore, early passage to issue is respectfully solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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